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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

8 June 2007

Ambassador Ann Barrett
Managing Director for
Office of Passport Services
Bureau of Consular Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Ambassador Barrett:

Thank you for taking my call on Thursday.

As I shared with you on the phone, my district staff has been overwhelmed by the number of constituent calls seeking assistance with passport applications. On average, my St. Louis office has taken 20 to 25 new passport cases a day. The other members of the Missouri delegation report similar levels of activity.

I am glad to hear that the State Department has decided to suspend the passport requirement for travel to Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean and Bermuda. As I told you on Thursday, while I support the goals of the program, I felt suspending the initiative would take a great deal of pressure off your offices and allow them time to catch up without adversely affecting the travel plans of many Americans.

I cannot stress strongly enough the degree to which my office has been affected by this problem. My staff delivers exceptional constituent service, but that was beginning to suffer because of the demands placed on them by those encountering significant delays obtaining a passport in a timely manner.

Again, thank you for heeding my advice and the advice of others and suspending the requirements affecting travel to our neighbors to the north and south.

Sincerely,



W. Todd Akin
Member of Congress